



Winter Resorts in Isere

Isère is in the Auvergne-Rhone-Alpes region in south-eastern France. It extends from the banks of the River Rhône to the summits of the French Alps. The region is easily accessible from Grenoble Alpes Isère airport, which sees numerous flights from London and other major cities in the UK land each week. Isère offers a varied, surprising and alternative holiday destination. With its mountain ranges home to more than 20 ski resorts, the great outdoors and plains, the region offers wide-ranging attractions.

For more information: www.isere-tourism.com

The major ski areas of **Alpe d'Huez** and **Les 2 Alpes**, as well as their pretty neighbours **Vaujany** and **Oz en Oisans**, are situated in the Oisans range.

The massif of Belledonne offers splendid skiing conditions: 250 km of slopes with an altitude difference up to 1,200 m. With state-of-the-art lifts, skiers will be transported speedily to discover stunning panoramic views. The Belledonne resorts, including **Les 7 Laux**, are known to offer easily accessible off-piste areas, as well as a large network of marked pistes, including the famous 'Casseroisse' in **Chamrousse**, where French sporting legend, Jean-Claude Killy, won the Olympic gold medal in 1968.

Although Vercors is mainly known for cross country skiing, the landscape here is different to that in Oisans or Belledonne: skiers can go through forests although much steeper and craggier terrain is available. The slopes are less challenging than in Oisans, but the good skiers can still find some serious black slopes, such as the 'Carole Montillet' piste (named after a former ski champion) in **Villard-de-Lans / Corrençon-en- Vercors**, which is the main Alpine resort in Vercors with 125 km of runs.

The resorts in the Isère territory will delight fans of mountain holidays, as these areas offer plenty of varied and accessible winter activities for all levels, including Nordic skiing, Alpine skiing on major summits and glaciers, snowboarding, freeriding, snow shoeing, dog-sledding, ski touring, snowshoeing and more.

AUTHENTIC SKI RESORTS



Just to the south west of Grenoble, discover unspoilt villages in the beautiful Vercors Regional National Park that become winter wonderlands from December to March. These places offer skiing holidays with a quieter pace and more genuinely French countryside feel to them compared to the big Alpine resorts; prices are much lower too. Cross country skiing is very



popular and this area is best for those after a peaceful, relaxing holiday rather than clocking up mileage on the slopes.

VILLARD DE LANS www.villarddelans.com

The biggest downhill resort, the charming old market town of Villards de Lans which, together with its small rustic neighbour Corrençon en Vercors, shares a very respectable 125 km of pistes, 53 slopes (15 green, 12 blue, 16 red, 10 black) with 20 ski lifts. There is the choice to ski in the heart of dramatic mountainous terrain or in the pine forests. It took off as a mountain destination early last century with the popularity of its 'clean air and milk' health cures – the milk comes from the local Villarde breed of cows. Skiing started in Villards de Lans at the foot of the Grande Moucherolle in 1925 and it hosted the World Skiing Championships in 1931, and part of the Winter Olympics in 1968. Intermediates will find plenty of blues and greens to keep them interested and wonderful views, especially over the Lac de Pre above Villard de Lans, and of the Alps and Mont Blanc from the highest lifts. Beginners can access nursery slopes right by Corrençon en Vercors and at Les Glovettes above Villards de Lans. Experts can enjoy no fewer than 10 runs, mainly on the higher slopes above Corrençon en Vercors and some off piste. Also found in the resort: snowpark, boardercross, airbag, freeride area, two large ski areas, beginner's area and a tobogganing area.

Cross Country Skiing: Cross-country skiing (classic or skating) is practiced over the 155 km (50 cross-country tracks) of the Nordic Space of the Haut Vercors. From a simple stroll on one of the loops marked out for cross-country skiing, to a total immersion in the heart of nature on the Highlands for ski touring, the Nordic domain is often compared to Canada's Far North because of the beauty of its landscapes. Designed for all levels, there are also two biathlon initiation sites with a shooting range (10 m and 50 m) and a Nordic park.

A joyful resort, Villard de Lans is the commercial centre and the most important ski resort in the Vercors massif, and the town has preserved its architectural heritage and friendly atmosphere. Today it has more than 4,200 inhabitants, and is lively all year round with pedestrianised streets, a local market, a wave pool, an indoor skating rink, an exceptional toboggan run, a bowling alley, casino and a museum. Set against the fabulous landscapes of France's largest Nature Reserve, Corrençon en Vercors is the place to choose for a traditional and peaceful resort. www.corrençon.com





VAUJANY www.vaujany.com

At 1,250 m, Vaujany is perched on a sunny plateau facing the Grandes Rousses massif. It seamlessly combines rustic charm and authenticity of a mountain village with modern facilities and offers superfast links to the heart of Alpe d'Huez ski domain and its 250 km of slopes. The resort is an excellent choice for keen skiers with the swift-modern lift system ensuring they can make the most of long days on the mountain. The natural village environment provides an ideal platform to discover and enjoy the mountains whether via snowshoeing, hiking or skiing, while the sports and leisure centre offers a range of additional activities. For an original activity, why not enjoy skiing in the last rays of sun? Two dedicated routes, reserved for experienced skiers, will take on magical aspects with the glow of the setting sun... Begin at the Dome of Petites Rousses at 2,800m altitude and finish at the Villette via the Alpette, or enjoy a 1,450 m descent supervised by trackers of the ski area Oz-Vaujany. Another quirky activity is to dine in the cable car one evening – imagine those views!



OZ-EN-OISANS www.oz-en-oisans.com

In the heart of the preserved Oisans massif, less than an hour from Grenoble, lies Oz-en-Oisans, directly linked to the Alpe d'Huez Grand Domain Ski by cable car. Nestled between the fir trees, this family resort offers breathtaking views of the Belledonne mountain range. Composed of 10 hamlets that range from 800 m to 1,350 m in altitude, the resort is particularly appreciated for its pedestrianised aspect. Oz-en-Oisans remains the essential gateway to discover a vast and varied area of the Alpe d'Huez ski area, with easy and fast access to 250 km of slopes.



OZ-VAUJANY SKIABLE AREA (1,125 m – 2,800 m)

The Oz-Vaujany domain is an ideal area for beginners and intermediate skiers, with varied slopes totalling 53 km. Children, beginners and tired legs will like the gentle return to the resort, thanks to the blue piste of Les Chevreuils. If skiers wish to discover the Alpe d'Huez larger ski area, take advantage of a daily upgrade supplement to Grandes Rousses (access can be found by the Poutran cable car or the Alpette cable car). Facts: 18 ski lifts, 30 slopes, 6 green, 12 blue, 10 red runs, 2 black

SKI AND THE CITY



LES 7 LAUX www.les7laux.com

Les 7 Laux is the largest ski area in the Belledonne range and sits at an altitude of 1,350 m to 2,400 m. The resort offers a wide variety of slopes and in particular, secure access to the Vallons du Pra, an exceptional wilderness area that has become a marked and secure off piste area while preserving the wild character of this high-altitude territory. Facts: 22 lifts, 45 pistes, totaling 120 km (10 green, 10 blue, 18 red, 7 black) plus 7 black "freeski" off piste. For the families try out the snowpark, the fun trails or the freerando access.

Most accommodation, shops, bars and restaurants have been purpose-built at Prapoutel (1,350 m) at the western end of the ski area, where the slopes benefit from the afternoon and evening sun. From there, slopes spread along the mountain eastwards to Le Pleyne (1,450 m), a "full mountain" site that overlooks the Haut Bréda Valley facing the chiselled peaks of La Belle Etoile and Les Cabotte, where the slopes attract the rising sun. Pipay (1,550m), a natural site overlooking the Grésivaudan valley is a popular base for day trippers, with chairlift access to the slopes. Intermediates will find pistes to suit them throughout the area. The main interest for experts lies in the off piste.





CHAMROUSSE www.chamrousse.com

Chamrousse's low key ski area offers excellent skiing and stunning scenery from December to April. It asserts itself as one of six resorts to have been awarded the Flocon Vert, a label that guarantees the sustainable commitment of mountain resorts.

Notably the resort hosted the 1968 Winter Olympic Games when the famous French skier Jean-Claude Killy won three gold medals. With 90 km of slopes, the ski resort is made up of two villages both just 45 minutes from Grenoble; Chamrousse Recoin (1,650 m) and Chamrousse Roche-Béranger (1,750 m) that is best suited to family skiing. Skiers can pass from one area to another via the slopes. Facts: 43 slopes (6 black, 16 red, 14 blue, 7 green) with 15 ski lifts. The resort also offers night skiing.

Chamrousse boasts an efficient lift system meaning there are rarely any queues, and offers access to excellent pistes for beginners and intermediates, with a number of off-piste runs for the more advanced. At La Croix de Chamrousse (2,250 m), enjoy the 360° panorama: a magical view of all surrounding mountain ranges (Oisans, Vercors and Chartreuse), and of Grenoble and its valleys. From there, you can reach all parts of the resort and enjoy the spectacular sunsets.

Ski touring is becoming more popular, and Chamrousse has been offering a marked and safe itinerary for the past four years and a second ski tour using seal skins. Many hikers enjoy leaving from the Casserousse bend. Specifically for ski tourers, Chamrousse has set up a secure and signposted area that allows them to reach the "off-piste" departures that lead to Lac des Pourettes and Robert Lakes. It is also home to a large cross-country park with 44 km on 9 slopes (1 black, 3 red, 1 blue, 4 green) plus 7 snowshoe trails. Winter activities such as dog-sledding, snowshoeing or ice diving are popular in Chamrousse. Competitively priced holiday packages await, the kind you would associate more with Eastern Europe. Or why not stay in the city of Grenoble and enjoy a city ski trip?



Grenoble has a large student population, which means plenty of good cafes, bars and restaurants. The oldest cafe in Grenoble, Café de la Table Ronde (also thought to be the second oldest cafe in France), founded in 1739, is a good spot for a coffee on the terrace or dinner of classic French fare. The spherical 1970s cable cars, known as "the bubbles", connect the town to an 18th century fortress at the top of La Bastille hill, which has incredible views over



the city and surrounding mountains.

Grenoble, capital of the Alps, is always at the forefront of innovation – the first French university in seven disciplines, plus the metropolis offers many other activities: mountain biking, climbing, via ferrata, canoeing... It is also a sustainable destination, with the possibility to cycle 320 km of bike paths.

Stroll through its charming medieval centre and take the cable car to contemplate the four surrounding massifs. Alternatively, a quality museum offers national and contemporary scenes, as well as works by renowned street-art artists.

INTERNATIONALLY ACCALIMED SKI RESORTS



L'ALPE D'HUEZ www.alpeduez.com

Everyone knows its name: Alpe d'Huez, the mythical stage of the Tour de France cycling tour starting from Bourg d'Oisans, with its 21 bends rising more than 1000 metres in altitude. It can be found perched on a plateau facing due south at an altitude of 1,860 m, like an "island in the sun". Alpe d'Huez was born in 1936 with the arrival of the first ski lift, invented and inaugurated by Jean Pomagalski. Its ski area, Alpe d'Huez Grand Domaine Ski, is a huge playground with 250 km of slopes divided between Alpe d'Huez, Huez, Auris, Oz-en-Oisans, Vaujany and Villard Reculas, across more than 2,200 metres of altitude difference. This purpose-built resort has lots to keep visitors engaged.

Facts: 66 ski lifts, 250 km of terrain 111 slopes (34 green, 31 blue, 28 red and 18 black)
16 km: the Sarenne, mythical because it is the longest black piste in the world, 70 off-piste routes, 2 snowparks, 1 freestyle park, a virtual reality toboggan run on rails and a dedicated tobogganing area. Open from the end of November to the end of April.





LES 2 ALPES www.les2alpes.com

Les 2 Alpes lies between Grenoble and Briançon in a remote corner of the Dauphiné. The main asset of Les 2 Alpes is its altitude (1,600 m to 3,600 m) which allows skiing to continue throughout much of the year and makes it a popular venue for out-of-season ski and snowboard camps. It has been a ski resort since 1939, when a primitive rope-tow was installed. Unfortunately, this broke 15 minutes after the opening ceremony and hostilities with Germany got in the way of any further development until 1946, when a gondola paved the way for Les 2 Alpes to become an important French resort.

The purpose-built village was conceived as a station de ski on the sunny balcony above the ancient community of Venosc, to which it is connected by a six-person gondola. Venosc, with its cobbled lanes, craft shops and enticing restaurants, provides a welcome contrast and a tranquil alternative bed-base to the functional ski resort above it. The village is currently receiving a facelift with exteriors becoming wood-clad and more spacious and modern interiors than before.

The resort is suited to all levels of skiers. Some of the easiest skiing is higher up – both on and around the glacier. The benefit of this is complete beginners can learn against the panoramic backdrop of the High Alps rather than on a shaded slope tucked away on the outskirts of a village. Advanced skiers can explore the glacial terrain of La Meije, reached by snowcat, from the top of the ski area to the 3,568 m Dôme de la Lauze. From here you can ski all the way down to the ancient climbing village of La Grave.

Facts: 200 km of terrain, 96 slopes (12 black, 20 red, 49 blue, 14 green), 43 ski lifts a freestyle area, a Kids Park, a video timed parallel slalom area, a photo Jump, 2 DVA Parks and an ice cave.